

**Reading Genesis & Exodus as Christian Scripture for the Church Today**  
**Diocese of Chichester Online Book Group for The Year of the Old Testament 2023**  
**Session 1: Introduction, invitation and approach (11/1/23)**

**“as Christian Scripture for Today’s Church”**

(I’ll normally use the New International Version = NIV 1984 but you can of course use any Bible version you like!)

Close, careful reading with attention to the big picture and to today – assuming you might also want to read this with others e.g. in a bible study or that you might preach or teach these texts

Christian

Scripture

A brief overview of Bible reading down the centuries:

New Testament use of the Old Testament – sometimes surprising to us? – Christological – Sometimes allegorical / typological (i.e. patterns / pictures – e.g. Old Testament sacrifices “types” of the supreme sacrifice of Christ – Jesus a new Adam, Israel, Moses etc.)

Early Christian exegesis: Antioch (more literal); Alexandria (more allegorical)?

E.g. Gregory the Great on Job – (1) Literal – fairly minimally (2) Mystical / allegorical (3) Moral / practical – this text must be useful!

Medieval Exegesis: A four-fold sense

The Renaissance and Reformation – scholarship, original languages, manuscripts etc, literal meaning

Modern scholarship

Grammatico-historical criticism – just like any other book?

Reading the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible “on its own terms” – not imposing later Christian readings – maybe the OT is self-consciously prophetic, looking to a fulfilment?

Scepticism

Trends in Biblical studies:

Form Criticism

Source Criticism

Redaction Criticism (Redactor = Editor)

Cf. Genesis and other Ancient Near Eastern creation texts – is Genesis partly a polemic against ideas of many gods and a battle with chaos etc.?

The Documentary Hypothesis re the Pentateuch – Wellhausen (1883)

Sources: Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D), Priestly (P)

no manuscript evidence – so what?

Focus on the final form of the text not hypothetical reconstructions of its origins

Traditional to see the Torah as The books of Moses – but tricky for Moses to write about his death – what would the message be to the wilderness generation (even if you think that's a fiction)?

Law / Torah, Prophets, Writings – Torah as fatherly instruction

Literary criticism – how the story is told for effect - the literary and the historical if God is sovereign over history and inspiration

Biblical theology and progressive revelation – redemption-historical

Canonical criticism

Post-modern reader response – e.g. black feminist liberation theology reading of Exodus

Global voices

Theological Interpretation of Scripture

The original intention of the human author for his first readers but also God's Word for us today (and for the church in all ages)

Prayerful!

The role of the Holy Spirit – inspiration, illumination

Perhaps the human writers spoke better than they knew – a fuller sense? – The benefit of hindsight!

With the church (global, living and dead)

For the church (and obviously for the world!)

Practical, devotional – faith seeking understanding, and obedience

How might the Christian gospel be proclaimed from this text?

## Jesus quotes the Torah – Matthew 22:23-40 cites Exodus 3:6, Dt 6:5, Lev 19:18

Do you find the way Jesus reads Exodus 3 surprising?  
What could we say about Jesus' view of the Old Testament?

YHWEH - Yahweh - I am / I am who I am

God's necessary self-existence (aseity – *a se* – from oneself), immutability, eternity etc.

Cf. us

See below on the Bible as like a kind of burning bush

### Questions for discussion

Do you find this suggested approach attractive, possible etc.?  
Would you suggest alternative approaches?  
What are some of the difficulties and challenges of reading and teaching Genesis and Exodus as Christian Scripture for the church today?  
Why bother with Genesis and Exodus?  
How might we read and teach Genesis better? What has worked for you?

### Resources

These range from the basic and introductory to the academic.

Some of the following is relevant for any Bible reading, some is more particular to the Torah or Genesis & Exodus.

You may find some kind of study Bible helpful. The NIV Proclamation Bible gives a useful one sentence summary of each Bible book, some notes on introduction and structure etc. and some suggestions for further reading.

Best Commentaries - <https://bestcommentaries.com/>

A bible atlas and dictionary (I use the ones published by IVP)

The Bible Project – videos on how to read the Bible, Genesis and Exodus and themes such as sacrifice - <https://bibleproject.com/>

Dr Alistair Roberts comments on lectionary passages for much of the Bible - <https://audio.alastairadversaria.com/explore/>

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (IVP)

Some kind of Bible Overview is probably very useful e.g. the work of Graeme Goldsworthy, e.g. Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament (Paternoster)

Vaughan Roberts, God's Big Picture (IVP)

Full of Promise (Good Book Company) – Old Testament Overview – interactive Bible Studies

<http://rosclarke.co.uk/bible-overview/> - Part 1: Creation and Covenant (talk, handout, PowerPoint)

Resources on how to read the Bible and Bible Studies on Exodus -

<http://rosclarke.co.uk/bible-study-guides/>

G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (IVP Apollos)

Garry Edward Schnittjer, Old Testament Use of the Old Testament: A Book By Book Guide (Zondervan Academic)

Richard E. Averbeck, The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church: Reading the Torah in the Light of Christ (IVP Academic)

Gordon Wenham, Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch (IVP Academic) - excellent at literary readings of Gen and Ex – see his commentary in The Word Biblical series on Genesis, though I find the sections in WBC series a bit irritating

L. Michael Morales, Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption (IVP Academic), small paperback, superb

L. Michael Morales, Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus: 37 (New Studies in Biblical Theology, IVP Academic), while focussed on Leviticus includes a biblical theology from Gen 1 onwards

T. Desmond Alexander, From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction To The Pentateuch (Baker Academic)

O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants (Presbyterian and Reformed)

James M. Hamilton Jr., Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns – How Old Testament Expectations are Fulfilled in Christ (Zondervan Academic)

Vern S. Poythress, The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses (P&R)

Jean Danielou, From Shadow to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers (Ex Fontibus Company / Bloomsbury)

Christopher J. H. Wright, Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament (IVP)

'The Bible as Holy Scripture' Katherine Sonderegger *Pro Ecclesia* Volume 31 issue: 2, 127-141 (2022) This essay argues that the governing motif for a Doctrine of Scripture should be writing (a holy text) rather than speaking or disclosing, and Instruction rather than history or story. Paying close heed to Scripture's own self-identification as writing, as Book, brings the Five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch) to its proper place as head of the Scriptures, and places the New Testament as written text as proper complement to the Old. Torah is seen not mainly as narrative but testimony (a direct pointer to divine being and presence). Not all is prophetic / Christological / Messianic. We must not allow even the saving acts of God to eclipse God himself.

The Torah has a temple-like status. It is where God is found. The Lord dwells here for his people.

The Law first and principally.

We should not read the bible above all Christo-centrally or soteriologically but theologically and for encounter with God.

The Bible is a holy, redeemed, elevated social creature of human-making.

Prayerful spiritual metaphysical reading of these deep and unsearchably rich words. "I advocate for Israel's Scriptures as Magistra for Christian doctrine. Israel's Scriptures, under several descriptions, are the great Teacher of Christian dogma, and the long history of the Trinitarian and Christological debates are unthinkable without them. Unlike the narrative or Messianic notion of Scripture, however, I want to underscore here that the Five Books of Moses, the Torah, is the proper and original, the lasting Teacher of Christian doctrine, and I urge its return to prominence in Christian conceptions of Holy Scripture, and as guiding force in doctrine. The original ordering of the elements of Israel's Scriptures, I say—the Law, first and principally, followed by the Prophets, and the Writings—will invigorate Christian teaching by grafting it more firmly to its Root, the Life-blood of Israel and of its Cultus." (135)

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Churchpodmatics <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/church-podmatics/id1626400036>  
A really interesting discussion of Katherine Sonderegger's writing

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Katherine Sonderegger, 'Holy Scripture as Sacred Ground' pp131-143 in *The Task of Dogmatics: Explorations in Theological Method*, Los Angeles Theology Conference Series ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Harper Collins) – The Bible as the Burning Bush, God speaking, and we take our shoes off at this Holy Fire, meeting God there, the divine presence is here to be encountered

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Some of my own stuff can be found here - <https://marc-lloyd.uk/home/my-stuff/> - I've got some material on Leading Better Bible Studies

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**For next time: 25/1/23 – please read and reflect on Genesis 1 and 2**

Some things to think about:

What do you think the Genesis writer wanted us to get from these passages?

What questions might modern readers bring to Genesis 1 and 2 and how might we respond?

Are these chapters contradictory or complimentary?

How might these passages relate to Jesus / The Trinity?